

GETTING GOOD AT GETTING OLDER

rabbilaurageller.com

Rabbi Laura Geller, Rabbi Emerita of Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills, twice named one of **Newsweek's 50 Most Influential Rabbis in America**, was named by **PBS Next Avenue as one of the fifty 2017 Influencers in Aging**. Prior to becoming one of the first women to be selected through a national search

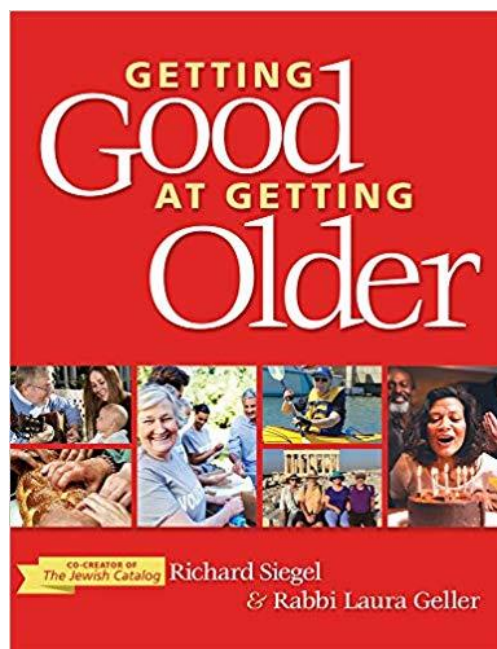


to lead a major metropolitan synagogue, Rabbi Geller served as the Director of Hillel of University of Southern California for 14 years and as the Pacific Southwest Region's Executive Director of the American Jewish Congress for 4 years. She was featured in the PBS documentary "Jewish Americans." Author of numerous articles in books and journals, she was on the editorial board of *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*. She serves as a Fellow of the Corporation of Brown University from where she graduated in 1971. In addition, she serves on the boards of Encore.org and the [Jewish Women's Archive's](http://JewishWomen'sArchive.org). Ordained by Hebrew Union College in 1976, she is the third woman in the Reform Movement to become a rabbi. She is a parent (with Richard

Siegel z"l) to Andy Siegel and Ruth Siegel and Joshua (Janelle) Goldstein and Elana Goldstein (Zach Rausnitz) and the very proud Savta to Avery and Levi Goldstein

The baby boomer generation transformed society in the 60s and 70s and changed the way the world saw young people. While this generation is no longer young, it is still revolutionary and is now confronting and challenging assumptions about aging by living longer, by being more active than their parents and grandparents, and by simply doing things differently as they age. In the process, boomers are changing the way the world sees older people. *Getting Good at Getting Older* is a tour for all those of "a certain age" through the resources and skills needed to navigate the years between maturity (building careers/raising families) and frail old age. It brings humor, warmth, and more than 4,000 years of Jewish experience to the question of how to shape this new stage of life.

Just as *The Jewish Catalog* gave a generation the tools to "take back Judaism from the staid hands of our elders and reshape it for our time," *Getting Good at Getting Older* gives the "young older" an opportunity to discover in Jewish tradition and culture the tools to bring meaning and purpose to this new stage of life. It offers ways to transform the paradigm of aging from one of decline to one of opportunity. And it will empower individuals of all backgrounds to change their lives as they change the world.



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A Creator of 70's Counter-Cultural Phenomenon *The Jewish Catalog* Now Has a Mission for Aging Boomers—Rewire

Getting Good at Getting Older

offers sensible, peer-to-peer advice for a new (and older) age, delivered with a smile

Getting Good at Getting Older is not a bumper sticker; it's a mind-set that bashes outdated assumptions about aging. Released by Behrman House in October 2019, this is a rich compendium of advice and resources for the next stage of life, created and compiled by Richard Siegel, one of the authors of the original *Jewish Catalog*, and his wife, Laura Geller, Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills. Geller, the fourth woman ordained as a rabbi in the U.S., was recently named an Influencer in Aging by Next Avenue.

Told in a style that is completely cleared-eyed about the challenges of aging, *Getting Good at Getting Older* also finds the humor in the predicaments we can create as we either try to address issues or seek to avoid them. With asides such as “Richard and Laura Bribe Their Kids into Having the Conversation,” together with whimsical line drawings by artist and cartoonist Paul Palnik, the book sets a light tone for the serious work of reimagining our approach to aging.

Getting Good at Getting Older is a deeply personal guide as well as a practical one. Siegel, who did not live to see the publication of the book (he died of cancer in late summer of 2018), writes movingly of “Living in the Land of the Sick,” guiding readers about coping with loss of one's own health, while Geller gently illuminates the first-hand experience of “Mourning and Moving On” through the loss of a loved one, and the surprise of feeling unprepared.

And yet this is far from a sad book—it is instead one about taking control in order to craft the life we want as we move into our sixties, challenging assumptions about the way the world sees older people, and showing how the baby boomer generation can revolutionize the culture around aging just as it revolutionized the culture around youth in its earlier years.

A host of contributors were called upon in this effort to get on with the business of living well as we age. They include Sylvia Boorstein from Spirit Meditation Center in Marin County, CA; Rabbi Ruth H. Sohn, director of the Spirituality Initiative at HUC-JIR; poet Merle Feld; Ruth Nemzoff, resident scholar at the Brandeis Women's Studies Research Center; Rabbi William Cutter, founder of the Kalsman Institute of Judaism and Health; Leah Bishop, a partner at the law firm Loeb & Loeb; Rabbi Elliott N. Dorff, a leading expert in bioethics; Rosemary S. Lloyd and Harriet Warshaw from the Conversation Project; writer Nessa Rappaport; and Marc Freedman, president and CEO of Encore.org, one of the nation's leading experts on longevity revolution.

Each chapter of *Getting Good at Getting Older* explores another area of potential improvement: Getting Good at Gaining Wisdom; at Getting Along, Getting Better, Getting Ready, Giving Back, and Giving Away. We can learn how to Rekindle the Flame, Acquire a Friend, Get Along with Adult Children, Take Care of our Emotional Selves, Give Strategically to Make Real Change, Talk about Life and Death, Leave a Legacy, not a Landfill, and even Have the Last Word in Funeral Planning. And each chapter ends with a set of tools and resources that provide options for next steps.

In the foreword, Geller writes, “Let me be clear: This is a book about life, meant to empower, delight, challenge, and whet our appetite for whatever comes next. Richard galvanized a generation of Jews to take ownership of their Jewishness through his writing and teaching. Through this book, he hoped to similarly infuse *our* generation with ownership of how we get good at getting older as we move into our sixties and beyond.”

Praise for Getting Good at Getting Older:

Rabbi Laura Geller has poured her generous soul into this offering. How astonishing to live in a time when the very nature of lifespan and thus of aging is transforming before our eyes. This book is pragmatic, playful, and wise. It is an invitation to stop treating age as an enemy, as our culture suggests, and to claim its abundant gifts.

—**Krista Tippett**, host of *On Being* and founder of The On Being Project

Reading *Getting Good at Getting Older*, I could feel myself getting *great* at getting older and am now looking forward to the next 97 years.

—**Norman Lear**, producer of *All in the Family*, *The Jeffersons*, *Good Times*, *One Day at a Time*, and *Maude*

Aging is an opportunity to rewire, not retire. *Getting Good at Getting Older* offers wonderful advice about how to keep yourself and your relationships active and vibrant, and to embrace this part of life with a sense of adventure.

—**Dr. Ruth Westheimer**, author of *Crocodile, You're Beautiful*; *Roller-Coaster Grandma*; and *Sex for Dummies*

Getting Good at Getting Older is a bedside companion, a portable best friend, and a baedeker of essential resources for anyone smart enough to age mindfully rather than just let it happen to them. - **Letty Cottin Pogrebin**, founding editor of Ms. magazine and author of *Getting Over Getting Older*

Calling all sages, elders, and perennials! If you are of the generation that changed the world once, and now, want to do it again — this whimsical and thoughtful book will delight and challenge you. Filled with humor, curiosity, and chutzpah, *Getting Good at Getting Older* is essential reading for all of us navigating the second half of life.

—**Marc Freedman**, author of *How to Live Forever*, and CEO of **Encore.org**

Read more about the impact of The Jewish Catalog:

<https://www.tabletmag.com/scroll/225606/diy-judaism>

Getting Good at Getting Older

Available wherever books are sold. Also available on Kindle
ISBN 978-0-87441-985-6; Paperback, 8 ½ x 11, 310 pages, \$17.95

Behrman House Publishers

241 B Millburn Ave., Millburn, NJ 07041

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